

## BAD GRANDPA

By Lorraine Viade, Psy.D.



Johnny Knoxville is a genius in the field of outrageous sight gags. If you have not seen any of the *Jackass* movies, you won't appreciate the evolution that is clearly evident from this latest Knoxville adventure. While *Jackass* is a series of unrelated scenes depicting the most disgusting and often nauseating images set up by his crew, *Bad Grandpa* takes that formula and wraps it up in a really charming but still outlandish package. What makes *Bad Grandpa* so good is Knoxville himself in the best old man makeup I have ever seen in a movie. He is unrecognizable as a grandpa who is stuck with the most adorable 8-year-old grandson. Their zany antics cross-country are what make the movie work so well. The chemistry between old man and little boy transforms *Bad Grandpa* from just another raunchy film to a really good movie.

Sure, there are all the usual set-ups that Knoxville is famous for, but when they happen to this character, they take on new life. And, knowing that the reactions are real from unsuspecting citizens makes *Bad Grandpa* even more fun to watch. I loved the characters and the premise. A very simple story with good actors is all it takes to make a successful movie. *Bad Grandpa* succeeds on every level. It is not appropriate for young children or for anyone who is offended by raunchy settings and sexual innuendo.

If you like the type of humor that makes you think, "Oh no, they didn't", then this is definitely for you. Of all the *Jackass*-style movies, this one is my favorite. I hope they make a sequel because the formula works. I am sure they could develop this into a franchise. Despite all the outrageousness, the message contained in *Bad Grandpa* is a valuable one. The bond that develops between grandpa and grandson is a real one; no matter how bad things might be, they could always be worse. Clearly, it shows how children are smart enough to know where they are better off and who really has their best interests at heart.

We need to listen to children who do not want to return to their parents. We need to respect their wishes because they know where – and by whom – they are loved. When we make life-altering decisions for our children, we need to reach out to grandparents to

see if they are viable options for these children. They might not be the ideal parents, but if there is true affection and love, the rest can be managed. So the lesson here is that even a bad grandpa can be a good parent, if given a chance. Knoxville delivers an important message in an irreverent manner.

I give *Bad Grandpa* four Lincoln Continentals.

